RNA FOR A BETTER LIFE IN THE HEIGHTS

RIVERVIEW Neighborhood Association

December, 1997 - January, 1998 *232 Ogden Avenue - Jersey City, N.J. 07307 - (201) 798-0493*

RNA IS NOT AFFILIATED WITH ANY POLITICAL PARTY, ORGANIZATION OR ELECTED OFFICIAL

CHRISTMAS GREETINGS

Merry Christmas
And Joyous noels
Ring throughout the land.
Included in these are wishes that
All the new year will be grand.

Toll the bells loudly,
Unfurl garlands gay, add
Zest to the punch and
Zing to your songs
On this happy, happy day!

Now follow the letter
That started each line
For the name of the person
Who penned this rhyme.

Holiday Recollections

[This article, written by our loyal member and friend Frances Santoro, originally appeared in the December 1988-January 1989 RNA Newsletter.]

The Holiday season on Ogden Avenue sixty years ago was quite different than today. The season officially started on Thanksgiving Day. Nowadays, the children dress up in costumes on Halloween and as is today's tradition, they beg saying "trick or treat". Years ago our custom as children was to do the same , but we did it on Thanksgiving day and we begged using the words "anything for Thanksgiving?"

Also in more recent years the children have deserted us residents and they now do their "thing" on more commercial streets as Central Avenue. In the "old days," little girls dressed up as big ladies. They tried to look as much like their mothers, grandmothers, aunts, or big sisters as they possibly could. They sometimes tried to imitate a popular movie star of the day. The boys, of

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HOLIDAY FOOD & TOY DRIVE

This is your last chance to contribute to the RNA annual holiday drive for food and toys for the less fortunate. Please bring your items of nonperishable foods stuffs or toys (either new or used but unbroken) to our December 9th meeting.

Call Maria at 659-2245 after 6 p.m. for another drop-off location. Cash donations will also be accepted and disbursed as the donor wishes. All items will be given to the Salvation Army for distribution during the holiday season.

RNA HOLIDAY PARTY

RNA cordially invites all its members, neighbors and friends to its annual holiday celebration to be held during the December 9th meeting. We also extend this invitation to our friends from other neighborhood and block associations and all the City officials from the various agencies that have worked with and helped RNA during the year. This invitation includes the Mayor and his staff, our Ward councilpersons and At-large representatives. There will be no official business conducted at this meeting unless there is an emergency to discuss.

We ask everyone to bring a special homemade recipe or favorite holiday treat, including appetizers, main courses and deserts. Only non-alcoholic beverages are permitted. You are also encouraged to bring cassettes of your favorite holiday songs and tunes for entertainment. See you there!

CHRISTMAS CAROLING

RNA will once again organize a group of hardy individuals for our annual neighborhood Christmas caroling. Please join us to wish our friends and neighbors a musical holiday greeting. We will meet at the park pavilion in **Riverview-Fisk Park at 5:00 P.M. on Sunday, December 21st**. The pavilion is located on Ogden Avenue between Griffith and Bowers Streets. Dress warmly with proper clothing and footwear. Printed songsheets will be handed out, so please bring your own flashlight.

If you are unable to walk with us for this holiday activity, please welcome the carolers to your house by putting on your porch lights. And show your appreciation by inviting them in for some good cheer and some hot refreshments.

HOLIDAY RECOLLECTIONS (contd from page 1)

course, had their own idols to dress up like. Policemen, firemen, railroad engineers with the blazing red neckerchief, were some of the idols that were copies back then. Some even tried dressing and walking like their favorite screen actor Charlie Chaplin.

Thanksgiving day also brought the traditional rivalry of the Dickinson/St. Peters football game. The bigger children and the adults were the ones to go to the game and root for their particular favorite. I like to think back (whether it was so or not) that there was always a goodly dusting of snow, which greatly contributed to the overall atmosphere of the season. The game was always played in the morning to ensure that the teams and the fans would get home on time to enjoy the traditional turkey dinner in the bosom of their respective families.

Then came Christmas. Only natural Christmas trees were available as artificial trees had not yet been invented. Trees were bought at locations right in the neighborhood - such as Palisade and Griffith - and would cost anywhere from twenty-five cents to two dollars. Those people with limited means, would wait until late Christmas Eve and the man selling the trees would give you one for practically nothing and more often than not for free.

The tree decorations were beautifully colored and were made of a very thin substance that could be termed glass. You had to handle them gingerly because they were easily broken. A tree was not considered properly decorated unless it had at least some strings of freshly popped pop-corn and garlands of gold and silver tinsel. There were other tree decorations such as little santas dangling from a rubberized string and striped candy canes were also hung on the branches by their own crooks. Next, candles in their holders were snapped onto the tree branches and a little village including the creche was built beneath the tree. The final touch was placing the treetop ornament. An angel or a star were the ones used the most. Sometimes it was a special steeple-like piece that was made of thin colored glass.

On Christmas Eve the family all gathered and the candles were lit in the otherwise darkened room. It was a festive and spiritual sight indeed. Christmas wreaths were also made of natural branches since artificial wreaths were, as yet, unthought of. In later years it became popular for people to light up the front of their homes with many strings of electric lights.

Gifts were part of the tradition then as well as now. Girls usually received dolls, doll carriages and paper doll cutouts. Boys often received baseball equipment, electric trains or erector sets. Boys and girls might also be given sleds, iceskates, rollerskates or bicycles. Children, especially those who had received new sleds, were most happy when their prayers were answered and it would snow. They wanted the chance to try their new sleds.

In this neighborhood that was made twice as much fun because nearby streets are hilly and the children made a big thing out of "belly-whopping." This maneuver consisted of running with your sled a small distance, throwing the sled down on the snowy street or hill and then jumping belly down on top of the sled. The ride itself often covered less distance then the preparation for it. Auto traffic, in those days, did not pose as a great a threat to us as today's traffic poses to children now.

Many working people were paid on Christmas Eve. You can imagine the last minute frenzied shopping. Like the Christmas tree vendor, many merchants lowered their prices for such last minute sales.

Employers had the custom of giving their employees gifts on Christmas Eve. Often these gifts were gold pieces. They ranged in value from the attractive $2.50 piece to the $20.00 piece, better know as the Golden Eagle.

In those long-ago years, New Year's Eve was spent at home partying with family and friends while awaiting the arrival of midnight. Familiar signals would announce the New Year. Those dependable whistles from the factories of the surrounding area and fog-horns from vessels on the Hudson River were the clarion ushering in the first minute of the New Year. Traditionally, at midnight, the children would march around the block beating mercilessly on pots and pans to ward off evil spirits. (The warding off of evil spirits with loud noise originated in ancient China.) Soon after midnite, neighbors visited each other to convey their best wishes for the new year.

I hope, fellow RNA members, that my remembrances are some that you also share. I hope that my little foray into the past has brought back fond memories of your childhood. Most especially I hope that you remember the joyousness of the whistles and the fog-horns on the eve of the New Year and of how much more meaning the event held for us because of those familiar sounds.

HAPPY HOLIDAYS!

Frances B. Santoro

What is an MUA?

Several weeks ago the Schundler administration presented an unusual plan to the City Council to remedy the deficit in this year's municipal budget. The plan calls for the creation of a Municipal Utilities Authority (MUA) out of the existing Sewerage Authority. The MUA would then issue approximately $31 million in bonds to help plug a $94.5 million deficit in the proposed $280 million budget for the 1997-1998 fiscal year.

Two week ago, our two Heights council members, Tom DeGise and Bill Gaughan, voted to introduce this budget and the MUA proposal. However, there were not enough votes in the Council to introduce the budget because other members wanted more information about the MUA. On Wednesday, November 25th, the Council in a move that appeared to be more motivated out of resignation than approval, voted to introduce the budget and the MUA proposal.

Besides the initial $31 million "debt", the proposal calls for the MUA to pay the City $16 million a year from 1999 to 2008. To pay for these expenses, the MUA will have to increase water and sewer rates. A conservative projection is that the average residential household

water bill will increase by about $30.00 a year for each of the next three years.

If passed by the Council, this plan will drastically alter the way the City will finance itself for the next 10 years. The following are summaries of two letters published in the local newspapers that critically examine this proposal:

a) "The MUA will be starting with a $30.5 million debt to be repaid with interest over the next ten years. The revenues from water and sewerage charges would be the security to pay off this obligation. However, receipts of these two utilities already are pledged to repay almost $200 million, plus interest, of outstanding revenue bonds. In addition, the city has tapped the water department's surplus for $6 million this past year and will again for FY 1998. Obviously, any note or debenture for the $30.5 million would have to take a subordinate loan, and since it will be a secondary debt, a higher interest rate can be expected to be demanded. . . . It already is conceded that there will have to be an increase in rates. Simply put, the plan proposes to replace a [property] tax increase with higher water and sewerage rates. How much?"

b) "An MUA undemocratically changes the political structure of a city. Authorities are not elected by the people. It is taxation without representation. Members of authorities in NYC are overwhelming bankers, securities executives and businessmen with a few others thrown in for window dressing. . . . Eventually they take more direct political control. Besides non-elected Authorities, the next step is Financial Control Boards, again made up of bankers who make up demands for cuts in service to ensure debt service is paid. . . . [A] People's Budget Authority should be set up with diverse representation. It can produce a truthful report to residents on the city's economy, taxes, revenue and budget . . . "

As citizens of Jersey City, it is our responsibility to carefully review and question this year's municipal budget and its accompanying MUA proposal. This is essential in light of **Mayor Bret Schundler**'s questionable track record of solutions to the city's financial problems. His initial bulk lien sale in 1992 has only realized about 57 cents on the dollar or less than $25 million of the promised $50 million. Its subordinate note failed to generate any revenue. A second bulk lien sale also failed to realize its projected revenues. The collapse of the Breen plan to restructure these two bulk lien sales has resulted in an almost $6 million cash deficit. **Councilpresident Tom DeGise** has defended the MUA plan as more democratic than a tax increase because unlike a property tax hike, the burden under the MUA would be shared by industrial users and abated properties. [It should be noted that Mr. DeGise has not returned RNA's numerous telephone calls to discuss this rather confusing situation which will have a far-reaching effect on the future well-being of our City.]

Harbor View Holiday Party

RNA's annual holiday party for the residents of the Harbor View was a huge success. The celebration began with the arrival of Santa Claus, played convincing as usual by Robert Boesch. A big turnout of residents attended the party. There were gifts for all and plenty of refreshments and baked goods. Music was supplied by Frank Frega and Maria Tuzzo entertained with her songs. RNA would like to thank all the volunteers, including Catherine Keens, Frank Briody, Marcella Williams, Doris Brown, Camille Cesari and her lovely daughter, Madeline Rea, Patrick Moore, Claire Gaito, Harry and Isabel Siano, Rose Scalzo, Beatrice Bernasconi, Mary Mueller and Marie Goletsos. Apologizes to anyone who was not mentioned.

Special thanks to all those who made donations of baked goods, men's and ladies socks and other gifts. Thanks to Central Avenue Bagel Shop for their contribution of bagels. Dolly Quinton came through again with her delicious rice pudding. NID officer Ron Clemente helped out too.

It was nice to see Frances Santoro, Mrs. Don Addas and Mrs. Richard Santoro. Thanks to Elizabeth Mclain and her staff and Linda Dooley for their help and assistance.

Valerie Rea, Jack Rea, Maria Tuzzo

The Resurfacing of Palisade Avenue

Palisade Avenue property owners have recently been notified that the street will be resurfaced from Newark Avenue to Paterson Plank Road. In addition to the resurfacing, planned improvements include replacement of the sidewalks and curbs and improvement to the signage and traffic striping. The project is scheduled for the fall of 1998. The funds for the project are from a federal grant received through the New Jersey Department of Transportation.

Urbitran Associates, Inc., the company who will provide engineering services for this project, has sent out questionnaires to each owner inquiring if their property includes cellar doors, oil storage tanks and/or under-sidewalk vaults. This information is needed to aid in the development of the sidewalk renovation design.

If any property owner has not yet been contacted or for additional information, please contact:

Mark Kataryniak, Project Manager
Urbitran Associates, Inc.
2 Ethel Road, Suite 205B
Edison, New Jersey
(908) 248-5422

RNA urges all property owners to cooperate in this vital project to upgrade our community's infrastructure. It is a project that our community has waited for a long time. If there is enough interest, RNA will invite a representative from this company to one of our spring, 1998 meetings to discuss the project and answer questions.

RNA MEETS WITH NID TO RESOLVE DIFFERENCES

On November 24th, RNA met with members of the Department of Neighborhood Services in an attempt to establish better lines of communication between the two organizations. **Director Maureen Corrado** and NID managers **Laura Petersen (North 7)** and **Ronald Clemente (North 6)** listened to our complaints about the lack of response by the City to the various problems in the RNA community.

Ms. Corrado pledged that these two individual managers as well as the rest of the NID staff were to be held accountable for their respective areas. If they did not resolve the specific problem in a timely manner or notify their superiors about a difficult problem that they were unable to resolve, they would be disciplined and transferred to another station. Part of the managers responsibility is to respond to a complaint and report back to the resident concerning its resolution or status.

It was agreed at the meeting that each of these two managers will submit a list of their monthly projects which will be published in our newsletter to enable the community to track the progress of all complaints.

A list of persistent problems in each NID was then identified and acknowledged by the two managers. In North 7, the list included: the dumping on Holland Street and the need to have it reclosed for renovations, the fencing surrounding the old Exxon property on Palisade and Congress Street, PSEG's inability to repair the lighting in Riverview-Fisk Park for over six (6) months, the boarding up and then either renovation or demolition of 454 Palisade Avenue, the continuous repair of vehicles in the residential garages on Griffith Street and the status of two buildings on Ogden Avenue that have been boarded up and abandoned for approximately five years.

In North 6, the list of problems included: PSEG's inability to repair at least four floodlights along Palisade Avenue, particularly on the corners of Franklin and Hutton Streets for over six months; the persistent problems of sanitation and noise at 242 Ogden Avenue and the second request for an inquiry by the Building Department concerning an illegal apartment and overcrowding at this location; and the status of buildings on Ogden, Palisade and Griffith Street that have been boarded up and/or abandoned for over two years.

RNA will consider the next two months a probationary period for these two individuals in order to monitor their efforts to resolve these and other problems in their respective jurisdictions. If they do not satisfy our needs, Ms. Corrado will be notified to transfer them with other personnel who will hopefully be able to handle these issues.

At this meeting, RNA learned after the fact that as a result of our previous meeting with Ms. Corrado, the patroling of Riverview-Fisk Park by Park Patrol Officer Joseph Ventimilla was extended for sixty days to the beginning of December. This program, which our Park was not part of till the end of the 1997 summer, is a good and worthwhile program. Ms. Corrado has promised to include us in the program starting in the spring of 1998.

The only way to ensure that our community is receiving the City services it deserves, is for each resident to complain to their NID representative concerning any quality of life problem on their block.

Ronald Clemente of North 6 is responsible for Ogden and Palisade Avenues from Cuneo Place to Griffith Street. He should be contacted through his voice mail at **547-4974, extension 8015.**

Laura Petersen of North 7 is responsible for Ogden and Palisade from Griffith to Congress Streets. She should be contacted by voice mail at **547-4974, extension 8021.**

Both Ms. Petersen and Mr. Clemente have promised to attend our monthly meetings to discuss complaints and give status reports.

UPDATE: Unfortunately, there is nothing else positive to report concerning RNA's efforts to get the City to respond to its needs for maintenance and basic services. It is another month that the **Office of Constituent Services** has not contacted RNA to communicate its progress (if any) on our demand for the restoration of park land that was adversely possessed by a property owner adjacent to Riverview-Fisk Park. It seems that the members of that office decide arbitrarily what complaints they will attend to and who they will respond to. One can only assume that **Director Sheridan** feels very secure in his job.

Joe DeSouza, the acting Director of the **Division of Traffic Engineering** has not returned telephone calls inquiring about the status of the restoration of the bus stop on the southbound side of Palisade Avenue and Griffith Street. It is over a month since the Council was going to decide which corner to restore the signage for the bus stop.

There is also another issue that RNA would like Mr. DeSouza to address. In the middle of November, a monitoring box and cable were installed at the corner of Bowers Street and Ogden Avenue. Apparently this installation was in response to our five month old request to install a traffic device to prevent vehicles from speeding northbound through the Park. However, the installation was removed in less than one week and there has been no report from Traffic Engineering as to what the results were.

Finally, **Councilpresident Tom DeGise** has not returned numerous telephone calls to his Council office and home to enlist his help in solving these problems. Now both members of the Heights Dynamic Duo appear to be ignoring RNA. One wonders if its anything we printed. Its a secure feeling knowing that our elected officials are "responsive" to their constituents' needs.

Mountain Road Renovation

[The following is a summary of the Department of Engineering's responses to RNA's list of final recommendations to this project.]

1) The short masonry retaining wall at the Franklin/Ogden end of the road is in poor condition. Most of the granite capstones have long since been removed and the top of the wall is not uniform. Also, there are two areas that have a lot of missing stones. Our original plan was to rehabilitate the wall and restore the missing capstones. When we did the grading plan and the cross sections, we saw that the new road elevations would leave very little of the wall exposed. Therefore, the most cost effective option is to bury the wall under the new embankment.

2) As far as landscaping is concerned, we will leave a 65 feet by 12 to 18.5 ft. wide rectangular area near the Franklin/Ogden end of the road (adjacent to the Harbor View Health care Center) which will be landscaped with ivy plants instead of the green colored bituminous treated stone slope protection. We do not want to landscape any embankment beyond this area because the slopes are steeper and we are concerned about soil erosion. The green colored bituminous treated stone

slope protection will stabilize the embankment against any erosion and yet still be aesthetically pleasing and maintenance free by preventing the growth of wild vegetation as has occurred on the reconstructed New York Avenue going into the City of Hoboken.

3) The new Mountain Road is designed as a 15 foot wide one lane roadway with no parking on either side. As a result, we can not safely accommodate any parking spaces on either side of the street at the Franklin/Ogden exit.

4) We have removed the fence in front of the northern retaining wall and have made the triangular area at the first turn a cobblestone sidewalk/plaza. The center of the plaza will have the cobblestones arranged in a 15 foot diameter circle. However, please note that for safety reasons, the 10 foot wide concrete sidewalk along the curb will remain. Also in the future, a plaque detailing some of the history of Mountain Road could be installed in this plaza area.

5) Mountain Road has approximately 125,000 cobblestones. as per your request, we will specify on the plans and specifications that five (5) truckloads of cobblestones are to be delivered and dumped in piles at the community garden at Riverview-Fisk Park. At this time, the remaining cobblestones and possibly granite curbs will be transported to the Jersey City Department of Public Works at Route 440 and Culver Avenue. We are opposed to dumping any cobblestones in the passive landscaped area because this area will be topsoiled, seeded and hopefully mowed and maintained by the Division of Parks. If RNA needs additional cobblestones in the future, you can pick them up from the Public Works yard.

6) The reason we proposed removing the granite capstones on the masonry stone retaining wall on the cliffside was that the elevation of the new sidewalk does not match the top of the existing capstones. The top of the capstones varies from being 3 inches below the new sidewalk to 6 inches above the new sidewalk. Aesthetically, this would not look good not to mention slightly restricting the clear width of the sidewalk. Also we were concerned whether anchoring the fence into the capstone which is just laying on top of the wall could safely support the fence. As a result, we came up with a design that would construct a reinforced concrete cap on the top of the wall which would be bonded to the wall and provide better stability for the fence. We are however, including your suggestions as an alternative to the contract.This alternative will specify that the existing capstones be removed and then reset to be flush with the top of the new sidewalk. After we receive the bids for the project, we will evaluate both options and decide which way to proceed.

7) As part of the project, there will be extensive cleaning up of the site area. All garbage, dead trees, vegetation, debris, etc. will be removed to the limits shown on the plans. Certain trees will be trimmed as required for roadway visibility. In reference to the area you mention which is behind the houses on Ogden Avenue, we are clearing the slopes for a distance of 20 feet beyond the existing curbline/wall line. This limit is already outside the public right of way. Any further cleaning, particularly on private property, will not be a part of this contract. The Incinerator Authority or DPW may be able to address this problem.

8) As far as street lighting is concerned, we have been communicating with PSE&G since February 1997. Unfortunately, PSE&G has transferred some personnel we were dealing with and even lost our file. Finally, on October 30, 1997, the Divisions of Engineering and Traffic Engineering had a field meeting with PSE&G. at that meeting we walked the entire roadway and came up with a suitable lighting plan. PSE&G will finalize the locations of the new street light poles and send us a print so we can show them on our plan. Once the new roadway is opened up, we will inspect the roadway at night to verify that the entire area is well lighted to discourage any loitering or illegal activity. PSE&G has assured us it is not a problem to add additional lights, if some dark spots are discovered. We will send you a copy of the plan showing the new lights once it is developed.

9) During construction, the Ogden/Franklin end of the street is shown on the plans to be closed with chain link fence and a 12 foot access gate. We have added a note on the plans stating that the contractor should use the other entrance/exit gate at Hope Street and Mountain Road as much as possible. However, we cannot totally deny access to him at Ogden and Franklin. Certain work activity will have to be accessed from Ogden And Franklin plus it provides a second emergency exit from the work area. In addition, the gate is also needed for tenant access to basement apartment at 202 Ogden Avenue. The specifications prohibit the parking of any construction equipment or storing of any material on residential streets.

10) We have stated in the past that the reason we started the drainage system at its present location was cost. The project as designed now already exceeds the amount NJDOT Local Aid grant of $615,000. The cost of the drainage system is 15% of the total project cost. This is a very difficult project because there is no existing drainage system in the area. We feel we have designed the best drainage system considering the site and budget constraints we are under. We have no choice but to connect our storm drainage to a Hudson County sewer on Paterson Plank Road because the County sewer is undersized. Future light rail construction in this area may solve this problem. Also we are opposed to installing any weep holes along the cliff retaining wall due to the unstable nature of the wall and the soil erosion problems those weepholes will create.

11) Our Division of Traffic Engineering has approved the proposed traffic striping and signage plan. Your suggestion to add a left turn lane on the northbound Paterson Plank Road at Mountain Road would involve changing the existing striping on Paterson Plank Road which is under Hudson County's jurisdiction. Since we do not know the impact of NJ Transit's proposed Hudson-Bergen Light Rail Transit grade crossing will have in this area, we feel it is prudent to leave Paterson Plank Road as it is now and perform a traffic study once Mountain Road is opened up.

12) We currently show two "Do Not Enter" signs at Ogden and Franklin for eastbound Franklin Street traffic. We also show one stop sign for westbound Mountain Road. However, we have added a second stop sign. There will also be a "Stop" striped on the roadway.

13) We show two "No Trucks" signs at the entrance to Mountain Road at Hope Street. It is not necessary to have "No Trucks" signs at the Franklin and Ogden exit

because the two "Do Not Enter" signs state that it is illegal for any vehicles to enter Mountain Road from that end.

We thank you for your comments as they have hopefully helped us to produce a better design. As far as the project schedule is concerned, the plans are basically finished. Unfortunately, the large amount of specifications will not be finished typing until mid December. We incurred a slight set-back because a computer virus destroyed some of our technical specifications for this project.

Nevertheless, we hope to send the completed plans and specifications to the NJDOT Bureau of Local Aid in mid December for their required review and approval. As a result, the project will be advertised for bids in early January 1998. The project will start construction probably in March and last roughly 7 months. We will keep you advised of further developments and give you an opportunity to attend the preconstruction meeting. We will also send you a set of final signed plans. Once again thank you for your continuing cooperation in this project.

John Mucha, Principal Engineer
Gerald J. Nissen, Director of Engineering

RECREATION SUMMIT

On January 8, 1998, **Mayor Bret Schundler** has scheduled a public meeting in the Council chambers to discuss "Jersey City's planned capital improvements on parks, playgrounds, cultural centers and our adult and youth recreational programs." As an ardent supporter for the upgrading of our neighborhood parks and the development of recreational activities for our residents, RNA would like to make the following suggestions.

For several years, RNA has been involved in a summer basketball league run in conjunction with the **Department of Recreation and Cultural Affairs** in Riverview-Fisk Park. Some specific suggestions about that program and its administration are as follows:

a) raise the age limit from 17 to 21 years of age to include more young adults;

b) decrease the amount of time and the number of staff who are hired to sit in the park to collect names and rosters before the league begins;

c) use the money that is saved from the above suggestion to develop the skills of those who will work as game officials, scorers and timekeepers;

d) overall provide better training to the workers and volunteers;

e) reinstate the clinics to provide skills training for young children early in the season and skills training for volunteer coaches and paid staff throughout the season;

f) limit the number of days per week that the league runs from five to three; and

g) most important, add a service component to the league participants.

This year the Department of Recreation ran a flag football league in Park. Although the number of participants involved in this league is not known, the Park in general does not have a large enough area for playing football.

One suggestion would be to create a safer space for the supervised activities in the Park for our children and young adults. This could be accomplished by closing Ogden Avenue between Griffith and Bowers Streets in the afternoons between the hours of 3 to 6 PM. Ideas for recreational activities for this safe space would be team sports such as volleyball, street hockey, frisbee, soccer, kickball and wiffleball.

In terms of other summer activities, it would be nice to have a day program for younger children. They could meet in the Park. The playground and the basketball court are available. Our Community Garden could also be a good on-going activity for the children.

For the very hot days, a suggestion would be to restore and activate the sprinkler on the cliffside of the Park off Griffith Street. And of course, a field trip once or twice a week to the Heights public library to listen to and read stories would be entertaining as well as educational.

For older youth, particularly the young women, it would be very helpful if they were exposed to more female role models. Women who are confident and skilled in sports, but also willing to teach and nurture the youth who are not as confident or skilled in their performance.

From a more practical viewpoint, for all youth, but especially for young girls, it is important for them to learn some basic self-defense maneuvers, and concomitantly to become more self-assured in their ability to say "NO" when they don't want to do something.

On the positive side, the park patrol ranger and park attendant are working out well and have made a noticeable difference in both of our Parks, Riverview-Fisk and Janet Moore and should be continued.

In terms of capital improvements for our two Parks:

1) RIVERVIEW-FISK:

a) the renovation of the eastside or cliffside part of Riverview-Fisk Park, including repair of the park pavilion, replacement of the retaining wall and fencing along the cliff, landscaping and planting of new trees. [The Palisade Avenue side of the Park was renovated in 1990, with the City's promise that the rest of the Park would be renovated shortly after.];

b) better lighting throughout the Park;

c) totally enclose the children's playground on Bowers Street;

d) the development of an enclosed dog run to allow pet owners a legal area to run their pets; and

e) the repair of existing fencing surrounding the basketball court and the playground.

2) JANET MOORE:

a) the development of a flower garden and hardy landscaping;

b) the re-enforcement of the existing fencing enclosing the Park by welding cross-bars to prevent people from bending the bars to sneak in after hours.

Patrick Moore

Recycle this Newsletter - Pass it on to a friend!

MEETING MINUTES:

[The following are the official transcripts for the two RNA meetings held on October 14, 1997 and November 11, 1997.]

OCTOBER 14, 1997

COMMUNITY POLICING:

The Jersey City Police were represented by **Lieut. Niersted**, who is the acting commander of the North District, **Sgt. Ruby** and our two NTF officers **Scott Schnee** and **Lorenzo Tosado**. There was a discussion concerning the following topics:

a) the recent attack on one of our residents and community gardeners, **Kevin Walsh** on Mountain Road;

b) the development of a computerized crime tracking system, known as COMSTAT for Jersey City. It will be similar to a program that was developed by Police Commissioner William Bratton for New York City. Our police commanders are responsible for the levels of crime tracked in their districts and must answer high statistics with plans for solutions;

c) the need for lighting on the cliff to address the problems on Mountain Road behind Ogden Avenue;

d) the ongoing problems of drinking, drugs and after-hours loitering in Janet Moore Park. The City has been notified about how people bend the hollow steel tubed fencing surrounding the Park but has yet to strengthen it with cross-bars as was promised this past spring;

e) the status of the empty lot on the cliff-side of Ogden Avenue and Cuneo Place. Previously, Councilperson Bettinger suggested that the local community decide whether to close it off or create a paved, fenced parking lot for the residents;

f) the over-night parking of vehicles from the body shop on Griffith Street between Ogden and Palisade Avenues;

g) the unnecessary proliferation of commercial minivans on Palisade Avenue. The police have been ticketing the drivers who do not have the proper credentials or are creating traffic problems; and

h) customers exiting the Popular Supermarket's lot on Woods Place who make illegal right turns onto Ogden Avenue.

The membership commented that in general there has been a change for the better on Palisade Avenue with the increase of NTF and police patrols. The Avenue is much improved and it is quieter.

MOUNTAIN ROAD:

There was a discussion of RNA's final recommendations to the Engineering Division concerning the renovation of Mountain Road. An additional suggestion was made for the creation of approximately five parking spaces at the western exit of the Road for local residents. [The Engineering Division's response to our recommendations is printed on page 4.]

NID DISCUSSION:

CEO **Ronald Clemente** and Supervisor **Ufredo Merchan** were present to discuss the state of affairs with the NID program in our neighborhood. There was still no appointment of new NID Managers for either NID North 6 or 7 districts.

The following problems were discussed:

a) Dumping is on the increase at the following locations: the deadend at Griffith Street and Ogden Avenue, Ravine Road (New York Ave.), Holland Street;

b) other complaints concerning Holland Street: the road should be closed to vehicular traffic because of the danger of falling debris from the overpass; the barricades should be replaced and the plant overgrowth needs to be cut back;

c) storm drain on Palisade Avenue and Ravine Road caved in;

d potholes on Palisade Ave. and Hobson Street;

e) vehicles blocking active residential driveways.

A suggestion was made to call the North District front desk (547-5350) and ask for either Sgt. Ruby or Lisi when the police do not respond to your complaint to the radio room;

f) a request for a written report concerning the problems at 242 Ogden Avenue, including loud music, garbage storage, illegal apartments and overcrowding; and

g) the feeding of pigeons and squirrels and the potential danger of attracting wild animals from the cliff.

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

1) **Valerie Rea** led a discussion about the upcoming Harbor View holiday party for the residents.

2) Plans for the fall clean-up and planting weekend scheduled for October 25th were coordinated and volunteers were recruited.

3) Bags were given out for garden recycling and residents informed that additional bags could be picked up at the Municipal Building at 325 Palisade Avenue.

4) The group voted on the following amounts:

a) $50.00 for the purchase of new membership cards;

b) up to $53.00 for plant bulbs and bushes for planting in both local Parks from the Park fund;

c) up to $150.00 for the Harbor View holiday party; and

d) up to $50.00 to purchase a fruit and gift basket to crime victim Kevin Walsh.

5) Asking residents and members to contribute to the annual RNA Food and Toy Drive.

NOVEMBER 11, 1997

COMMUNITY POLICING:

NTF officers **Shnee** and **Tosado** discussed how on Mischief night, the day before Halloween, there were lots of calls but things did not get out of hand. Someone mentioned how the Hamilton Park Neighborhood Association organize a safe "trick or treat" route for children in their local community.

A complaint was made about how a new business General Kool of Palisade Avenue was monopolizing the parking spaces adjacent to and across the street from its building with three vehicles - two of which do not have commercial plates. One of their pickup trucks was left

parked on the street for a whole weekend with refrigerator units on it.
The local dumping problem was discussed again.
Lieut. Niersted asked the group to show its appreciation for the work that the NTF officers are doing by writing recommendations to the Director's office.

PLANNING DEPARTMENT:
Claire Davis of the Planning Department was our guest speaker. She brought a slide show and survey to get our input for the City's project to update its Master Zoning Plan. The slide show had over 100 pictures showing a variety of residential, industrial and commercial sites. We were asked to score on a scale of +10 to -10 based on how the individual felt about each individual scene. The planning Department will combine our responses with those from its other slide presentations around the City and use the results to raise the design standards for new development in the future.
Robert Cotter, the Director of the Planning Dept. has met with members of RNA and Sgt. Anthony Association to begin discussions for the renovation of Palisade Avenue from State Highway to Paterson Plank Road. As part of this dialogue, RNA will petition the City to consider the following proposals:

a) a steep slope ordinance for the Palisade cliffs within Jersey City's borders in order to limit future development on top of, below and on the face of these natural landmarks (similar to the regulations that Union City passed several years ago to protect its environment);

b) the revival of the Riverview Arts District as a means to encourage artists and artisans to settle in our community and renovate the boarded up and abandoned buildings;

c) maintain Palisade Avenue as primarily a residential zone and do not turn it into a specialized hospital zone for the future expansion of Christ Hospital [Representatives of Christ Hospital will be the guest speakers at the January 13, 1998 RNA meeting to discuss the status of the Primary Health Care Center at 324 Palisade Avenue.];

d) pedestrian access to the proposed NJT light rail system to be built below our neighborhood in the existing Conrail line, between the Palisade cliff and the western border of Hoboken. This would upgrade our community's access to public transportation; and

e) eliminating Palisade Avenue's designation as a truck route as alternative corridors are developed.

ANNOUNCEMENTS:
1) RNA voted to approve the following items:

a) Our official support of Sgt. Anthony's proposal to improve the traffic flow and safety at the intersection of Palisade Avenue and State Highway. An amendment was made to ask the group to consider vehicles making left turns on the southbound lane of the Avenue traveling to the Holland Tunnel.

b) Contribution of $100.00 to the **Coalition for a Better Waterfront**, a Hoboken -based activist group for its efforts to promote rational and more evironmentally sound development in Hoboken. In the past it has lobbied successfully for the smaller, more rational development of Hoboken's southern waterfront and the relocation of the NJT light rail system to the western side of Hoboken.
2) Discussion of Christ Hospital's proposal for a jitney service for the Heights community. [Representatives of Christ Hospital will be the guest speakers at the January 13, 1998 RNA meeting to discuss this project.]
3) The organization of a second round of tree planting as part of the Palisade Avenue treescape Program.
4) Discussion of RNA's holiday party on December 9th which is open to all its members, neighbors and friends, including other neighborhood and block associations and city officials.
5) Discussion of us organizing another group to go Christmas caroling this year.

Alison Fontana, Secretary

UPDATE: Intersection of Palisade Avenue and State Highway
At their November meeting, the Sgt. Anthony Park Association passed the following resolution: "It was decided to ask Councilman Bettinger to propose a resolution to include the extension of the sidewalk on the west side of the intersection with a barrier and to have a delayed green light signal." In addition it was proposed that signs be posted warning motorists that pedestrians have the right of way and also that this is a drug-free school zone. [The complete text of the proposal was printed in the November issue of the RNA newsletter.]
Sgt. Anthony has been working with the City and the NJDOT to improve the safety and traffic flow at this location. The NJDOT stated that it would take whatever action this Association proposes as long as it is supported by a resolution of the Jersey City Council.
Comment: It seems highly unusual for the City and State to concede their responsibility to research and develop traffic flow patterns for the improved safety of pedestrians and motor vehicles at this critical intersection. To suggest that the local community should do the work of professionals is unfair and unrealistic. Officials of these agencies are specifically hired, appointed and/or elected to do this work. Their response to the community's request for help is a clear indication of either their inability or unwillingness to do their job.

LETTERS to the EDITOR

MURAL PROJECT IS COMPLETED

Pro Arts wishes to thank the 350 individuals, neighborhood groups and businesses who each sponsored a foot or more of the biggest mural in the East. We also want to thank the members of the public who offered their input during the design selection process and helped determine the content of the final design.
After two and a half years of designing, 3 months of surface preparation and 3 months of painting, the 10-building-long project on Christopher Columbus Drive is finally finished.

Twelve professional painters and eight student interns from five Jersey city high schools worked hard to complete the painting before the winter freeze.
We want to give special thanks to the Jersey City Economic Development Corporation and the Urban Enterprise Zone Commission who arranged the primary funding and supported the concept that murals can be a serious tool for neighborhood improvement.
A plaque recognizing each of the sponsors will be installed in the spring. You can still purchase your own square foot of the mural for $10.00 and your name will be included on the plaque.
At this point, $16,000.00 has been contributed toward the $28,000.00 Pro arts is required to raise, leaving $12,000.00 yet to raise. Contributions are tax deductible and should be drawn to the Pro Arts Mural fund and forwarded to the address below.
Artists who wish to come on board for the next mural, which is planned for 1998, should immediately send a self addressed stamped envelope and request the prospectus from:

Pro Arts
229 Bay Street
Jersey City, New Jersey 07302

or call (201) 432-3272.

Leon Yost, Public Art Chair
Greg Baumgart, President

BAG LEAVES for SPECIAL PICK-UP!

Do not put the fall leaves in your regular trash. The Incinerator Authority makes them into mulch which is then distributed to community gardens. Place the leaves in the free biodegradable brown bags available from the City and not plastic bags. The bags should be set out ONLY on the following two Thursdays: **December 4th** and **December 11th.**

These bags can be obtained, between 9AM to 3 PM, from the following locations:

a) 325 Palisade Avenue,
b) Incinerator Authority, 501 Route 440, and
c) City Hall, 280 Grove Street.

For more info, call the Incinerator Auth. at **432-4645.**

CONTRIBUTE TO YOUR NEWSLETTER

What do you feel about the quality of life on your block or in your neighborhood? Tell us what you think. Have your voice heard! Drop all articles, comments and/or recipes in the mailbox, attached to the gate, at 232 Ogden Ave. Mark the envelope, "RNA NEWSLETTER." The next deadline is **Friday, January 23, 1998.**

1998 MEMBERSHIP DUES

RNA's 1998 annual membership is **$7.00** per person. Membership entitles you to nine issues of our newsletter, and voting privileges in RNA, if you live within the boundaries. Please support your community by paying your dues at the next meeting, or sending a check, payable to RNA, to 232 Ogden Avenue.
(Contact Jack Rea, if any paid member has not received their newsletters or a membership card.)

SPECIAL HOLIDAY COOKIES

APRICOT CRESCENTS

1 cup butter (no substitutes)
2 cups all-purpose flour
1 egg yolk
1/2 cup sour cream
1/2 cup apricot preserves
1/2 cup flaked coconut
1/4 finely chopped pecans

1) In a bowl, cut butter into flour until the mixture resembles coarse crumbs.
2) Beat egg yolk and sour cream; add to crumb mixture and mix well. Chill several hours or overnight.
3) Divide dough into fourths. On a sugared surface, roll each portion into a 10-inch circle.Turn dough over to sugar top side.
5) Combine preserves, coconut and pecans; spread over circles.
6) Cut each circle into 12 wedges and roll each wedge into a crescent shape, starting at the wide end. sprinkle with sugar.
7) Place points down 1 inch apart on ungreased baking sheets. Bake at 350 degrees for 15-17 minutes or until set and very lightly browned. Immediately remove to wire racks to cool. Yield: 4 dozen.

SOUR CREAM COOKIES

1 cup shortening
1 3/4 cups sugar
2 egg yolk
2 tsp. vanilla
1 cup sour cream (thick)
1 tsp. baking soda
5 cups flour
1/4 tsp. salt
2tsp. bakig powder

1) Cream shortening and sugar. Add eggs and vanilla.
2) Add baking soda to sour cream and add to mixture.
3)Sift together flour, salt, and baking powder and add to mixture. Stir until stiff batter forms.
5) Roll out cookies and cut into shapes with holiday cookie cutters (add more flour if needed).
6) Bake at 400 degrees for 10-12 minutes.
7) Sprinkle with nuts, raisins sugar, etc.

CELEBRATE THE HOLIDAYS with RNA at OUR NEXT MEETING on DECEMBER 9th at 7:15 PM at the HARBOR VIEW HEALTH CARE CENTER.

Bulletin board

Holiday Greetings for a Healthy New Year to our senior members:
Ruth Conrad, Mr. and Mrs. Dominick Rea and Frances Santoro

From Valerie's Kitchen:

Cranberry Cake Wreath

INGREDIENTS:

3 cups all purpose flour
1 1/4 cups of sugar
2 tps. baking powder
1/2 tps. baking soda
3/4 tps. salt
3 eggs
3/4 cup orange juice
1/2 cup (1 stick) unsalted butter, melted
1 cup fresh or frozen, thawed cranberries
1 cup coarsely chopped walnuts (4 oz.)
glaze (see separate recipe below)
cinnamon red candies or cranberries for garnish

1) Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Grease and flour 12-cup ring mold or Bundt pan.
2) Combine flour, sugar, baking powder, baking soda and salt in large bowl. Make a well in center. Add eggs, orange juice, and butter to well; stir liquid ingredients just until blended.
3) Add cranberries and walnuts to well. Stir together liquid and dry ingredients just until combined. Spread batter in prepared pan.
4) Bake in preheated oven for 45 to 50 minutes or until wooden pick inserted in center comes out clean. Cool cake in pan on wire rack for 10 minutes. Remove wreath from pan and cool completely.
5) Prepare glaze by gradually stirring 3 to 4 teaspoons milk into 2 cups of 10X (confectioners') sugar in a small bowl until smooth and a good glazing consistency. Makes about 2 cups.
6) Spread top of cake with one cup glaze. Tint remaining one cup glaze with green paste food coloring. If too thin for piping, stir in a little more 10X sugar. Spoon tinted glaze into pastry bag fitted with small round tip. Pipe on to look like pine branches. Decorate with candies or cranberries and red bow, if you wish.

December

Stockings are hung,
Candy canes, egg nog, cookies, gifts.
Everything is ready waiting for Christmas.
Put "Christ" back in Christmas and we will all have a merry and joyous time.
MERRY XMAS TO ALL!

Madeline Rea

POLICEBEAT

Residents should contact their **Neighborhood Task Force Police Officers Scott Schnee and Lorenzo Tosado, David Murawinski or Mark Conroy and Keith Armstrong** if they have a problem, a safety concern or knowledge of criminal activity at **547-5350** (the North District station's frontdesk) or **547-5719** (community service number). When leaving a message, include your name, telephone number, street address, the nature of the problem and the date and time of the message.

In addition, anyone with information about illegal drug use and/or drug dealing, should contact the JCPD Narcotics Unit at 547-5391. All calls will be strictly confidential.

A **Community Service Survey** form is reprinted below. The purpose of the form is to alert the police to particular chronic problems in our neighborhood. Please fill the form out and mail it to the North District at 282 Central Avenue. (You can remain anonymous.)

JERSEY CITY POLICE DEPARTMENT
NORTH DISTRICT
282 Central Avenue, Jersey City, 07307
547-5350: Front Desk
547-5719: Neighborhood Task Force

Community Service Survey

Name:_____
Address:_____
Home Phone:_____
Block Association:_____
Complaint & Observations for the period of_____

List the Locations for the following Problems:

Disorderly Groups:_____
Public Nuisances: _____
Narcotics Activity:_____
Unsafe/Unhealthy Sites: _____
Suspicious Activity:_____
Heavy Trucking: _____
Auto Thefts:_____
Burglaries:_____
Prostitution: _____
Gambling:_____
Other:_____
_____

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NOTICE:

This is a combined December 1997-January 1998 issue of the newsletter. RNA will hold a meeting on January 13, 1998 with representatives from Christ Hospital. The next newsletter issue will be published in February, 1998.

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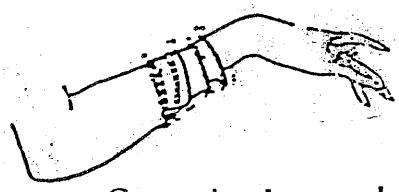

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FOR A BETTER LIFE IN THE HEIGHTS

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ASSOCIATION
WISHES ALL OUR
NEIGHBORS, MEMBERS
AND FRIENDS:
MERRY CHRISTMAS,
FELICE NAVIDAD,
HAPPY CHANUKAH
AND A HAPPY AND
HEALTHY NEW
YEAR!

YOU ARE INVITED TO THE ANNUAL RNA
HOLIDAY PARTY AT OUR NEXT MEETING
ON TUESDAY, DECEMBER 9th at 7:15 PM

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RIVERVIEW NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION

FOR A BETTER LIFE IN THE HEIGHTS

RNA

Vito Brunetti
Chairperson

Maria Tuzzo
Vice-chairperson

Allison Ferrari-Fontana
Secretary

Jack Rea
Treasurer

Carol Rebelowski
Sgt. at Arms

COMING EVENTS

1. **RNA MEETING: Tuesday, December 9th at 7:15 PM**
   LOCATION: THE HARBOR VIEW HEALTH CARE CENTER
   ANNUAL HOLIDAY PARTY: All our members, neighbors and friends are invited. Bring your own homemade holiday recipe or favorite food. Friends from other neighborhood groups and city officials are also cordially invited.

2. **CHRISTMAS CAROLING: Sunday December 21st, 5PM**

3. **RNA MEETING: Tuesday, January 13th at 7:15 PM**
   GUEST SPEAKERS: Christ Hospital representatives:
   a) Helen Rock, Director of Transportation
   b) Judy Lacinak, Director of Primary Care Center
   c) Barbara Davey, Director of Public Relations
   to discuss the status of the Center and the proposed jitney service